(b) As the website of the Govt, of Andhra Pradesh is hosted in the United States and not on Indian Internet backbone, it is technically not possible for VSNL/DOT to monitor the website and the extent of access to the website.

Post and Telegraph facilities in Rural Areas

24. SHRI CHIMANBHAI HARIBHAI SHUKLA: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) the per capita availability of post and telegraph facilities in the rural sector at present and how does it compare with urban sector;

(b) whether it is equivalent to that of the national average, if not, the reasons therefor;

(c) whether Government propose to increase the set up of post and telegraph offices in rural sector for the current year; and

(d) if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI KABINDRA PURKAYASTHA):

Department of Post

(a) A population of one lakh is served, on an average, by 21.85 post offices in rural areas and 7.5 post offices in urban areas. In other words, a post office in rural area on an average serves a population of 4576. This compares well with the average population served by a post office in urban areas, which is 13233.

Telegraph Services

Regarding Telegraph, the information is as below:

Rural

Total Rural population of country estimated on 1.4.98=71.75 crores.

Total number of telegraph offices working in rural areas=40529

Per capita availability of telegraph offices in rural area=0.0000564.

No. of persons per telegraph office=17,703

Urban

Total urban population of country estimated on 1.4.98=28.85 crores.

Total number of telegraph offices working in urban areas=7,428.

Per capita availability of telegraph offices in urban areas=0.0000257.

No. of persons per telegraph office=38,839.

Department of Post

(b) The availability of postal facilities, in the form of post offices, per one lakh population, in rural areas is better than the national average which is 18.17. On an average the population served per post office in the country as a whole is 5502.

Telegraph Services

It is higher than the national average.

Department of Post

(c) and (d) Yes, Sir. There is a target for opening 598 the set Extra Departmental Branch Post Offices in the rural areas of the country during the current year, subject to availability of resources.

Telegraph Services

Telegraph offices are opened on the basis of demand and justification by traffic. Wherever the public telephones facility is provided in post offices in rural areas, the telegraph facility is also provided. No specific targets have been fixed.

New Telecom Policy

25. SHRI C. RAMACHANDRAIAH: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have finalised new telecom policy;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) by when the new telecom policy will be implemented?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI KABINDRA PURKAYASTHA): (a) The

Government have not finalised the new telecom policy so far.

(b) and (c) Questions do not arise.

Modernisation of Communication Network in North-Eastern Region

26. **SHRI** PARAG CHALIHA: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have any proposal/ scheme to ultramodernise communications network in the North-Eastern Region;

(b) if so, the details/salient features thereof; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI KABINDRA PURKAYASTHA): (a) and (b) The details/salient features are as per statement. *(See* below)

(c) Question does not arise.

Statement

North East Region including Assam is having all electronic exchanges of latest type in the smaller and medium capacity. In case of large capacity exchange new technology switches are in the process of installation and commissioning in various State Capitals, in addition to having all the exchanges of electronic type.

The details of proposal/scheme launched by the Government for modernisation of the Telecommunication services in North-Eastern Region during the 9th Plan period (1997-2002) are given below:

(i) To provide telephone on demand by the year 2000.

(ii) To provide telephone facility in all the villages by 2002.

(iii) To provide STD facility to all the Exchanges.

(iv) To computerise trunk services in all the SSA Headquarters.

(v) Use of Optical Fibre technologies extensively in the network.

(vi) Introduction of better and reliable technologies for providing village telephones.

(vii) To have reliable media for all exchanges by 2000.

(viii) Computerised billing and accounting in all the divisions.

(ix) To modernise fault repair service.

(x) To computerise Directory enquiry services in all the SSAs.

(xi) To give priority for telecom facility in Senstive Border areas

Tribal and Hilly areas and

Industrial Growth centrers.

The following alternate technologies will be utilised for provided VPTs:—

(i) CDOT-TDMA-PMP

(ii) WLL

(iii) Satellite based VPTs

New services

INTERNET nodes are working at Guwahati and Silchar. It is planned to introduce Internet at District Headquarter level by March 2000.

Teleconferencing and ISDN Facilities

(i) Procurement of Video Conferencing Equipments for multimedia centres at Guwahati and Aizwal from M/s. ITI Calcutta has been taken up.

(ii) New technology switches (which support Video Conferencing and ISDN) are available at Guwahati and Aizwal, New technology switches have been allotted to Shillong, Imphal, Kohima and Agartala.

(iii) ISDN facility from C-DOT exchange is under trial by Telecommunication Engineering Centre, New Delhi.